

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 AEC-11 OIC-04 DPW-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01

AID-20 SR-02 ORM-03 SCA-01 DRC-01 /179 W

----- 001732

R 242045Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2627

INFO USMISSION USUN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BERN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 22636

BERN PASS TO USDEL TO LUCERNE ICRC WEAPONS CONFERENCE

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ICRC, PARM

SUBJECT: PARIS SEPTEMBER 20 CONSULTATIONS ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

1. US DELEGATION TO PARIS ICRC MEETING ASKED EMBASSY TO PASS THE FOLLOWING:

2. MEETING TO COORDINATE POSITIONS PRIOR TO LUCERNE ICRC CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENT EXPERTS ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS WAS HELD IN PARIS 20 SEPTEMBER. PRESENT WERE REPRESENTATIVES FROM ITALY, BELGIUM, DENMARK. UNITED KINGDOM, NETHERLANDS, FRG, IRELAND, CANADA, FRANCE AND UNITED STATES. WHILE NOT PRECISELY NATO IN COMPOSITION, GROUP WAS NATO IN OUTLOOK AND IN STATEMENTS AND EVEN FRENCH DELEGATES MADE REFERENCES TO NATO NEED FOR SOLIDARITY. REPRESENTATION HOWEVER WAS BILLED AS BEING FROM EEC PLUS US AND CANADA; NORWAY IN PARTICULAR WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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THEREFORE OMITTED.

3. WHILE DELEGATES WERE PRIMARILY DEFENSE PERSONNEL, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES FROM UK' FRANCE AND U/S WERE ALSO PRESENT. THERE WAS UNUSUAL DEGREE OF CONCURRENCE IN OBJECTIVES AND POSITIONS AND THERE WERE VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUS DECISIONS ON TACTICS FOR LUCERNE MEETING. FRENCH WERE REPEATEDLY COMPLIMENTED ON THEIR INITIATIVE IN CALLING MEETING AND GENERAL VIEW WAS THAT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN CALLED SOCNER. FRG REPRESENTATIVES MENTIONED THAT TWO OR THREE PREVIOUS EFFORTS HAD BEEN MADE TO CONVENE GROUP AT BRUSSELS BUT THESE NEVER GOT OFF THE GROUND.

4. MEETING OPENED WITH STRONG STATEMENT FROM FRG THAT GERMAN DELEGATION TO LUCERNE WAS UNEQUIVOCALLY CHARGED WITH NOT CONCURRING IN ANY WAY TO ANY WEAPONS RESTRICTIONS. FRG DEFENSE MINISTRY DELEGATE TO MOST PREVIOUS CONFERENCES ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THIS AREA AND HIS PRO WEAPONS PROSCRIPTION APPROACH APPARENTLY HAS BEEN REPUDIATED. FRG ALSO CIRCULATED PAPER ON GENERAL WEAPONS ISSUES.

5. UK CIRCULATED PAPER AND MADE DETAILED STATEMENT ON LEGAL CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING LEGALITY OR ILLEGALITY OF WEAPONS AND NOTED THAT A SECOND UK PAPER ON EFFECTS OF HIGH VELOCITY SMALL ARMS WOULD BE CIRCULATED AT LUCERNE.

6. US REPRESENTATIVE NOTED THAT WHILE STUDY ON PROBLEM IN US WAS IN AN EARLY STAGE SOME CONCLUSIONS APPEARED TO BE FORMING TO THE EFFECT THAT OPERATIONAL EVIDENCE AND EXPERIENCE DOES NOT SUPPORT CHARGES OF ILLEGALITY CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND THAT, IN MANY INSTANCES, CERTAIN WEAPONS SUCH AS NAPALM IN BATTLEFIELD USE SEEMED TO BE AMENABLE TO MORE PRECISE TARGETTING THAN POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES WEAPONS PARTICULARLY WHEN USED AGAINST FIELD FORTIFICATIONS AND IN VERY CLOSE SUPPORT OF GROUND TROOPS AND WAS THEREFORE NOT AN INDISCRIMINATE WEAPON AS CHARGED BUT ACTUALLY THE CONVERSE.

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7. IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT PREVIOUS STUDIES CARRIED OUT BY THE ICRC. SIPRI AND BY THE STOCKHOLM WORKING GROUP CONTAINED MANY INACCURACIES AND UK DELEGATE NOTED THAT IT WAS THEIR HOPE THAT LUCERNE CONFERENCE COULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLEAR UP MISIRFORMATION AND ERRONEOUS CONCLUSIONS AND HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE. BASIC PROBLEM WAS THAT PREVIOUS

STUDIES AND CONCLUSIONS BY 11 EXPERTS" WAS BASED ON INADEQUATE DATA ON WEAPONS EFFECTS. IN PARTICULAR, SWEDISH CONTENTION THAT SMALL CALIBRE HIGH VELOCITY WEAPONS WERE PARTICULARLY INHUMANE COULD NOT BE SUPPORTED BY EMPIRICAL DATA.

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PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /179 W

----- 001849

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8. WHILE MOST DELEGATIONS TOOK STRONG POSITIONS AGAINST COMPROMISES OR AGAINST SURRENDERING ON PROHIBITIONS, DUTCH DELEGATES WERE GENERALLY PESSIMISTIC, BELIEVED THAT SWEDES COULD MARSHALL THIRD WORLD AGAINST NATO COUNTRIES AND THAT WE WOULD HAVE A MOST DIFFICULT TIME AT LUCERNE AND IN THE FUTURE. ONE DUTCH DELEGATE THOUGHT WE MIGHT AGREE TO SACRIFICE NAPALM TO PROPITIATE DISARMAMENT DEMANDS. DENMARK AND CANADA REACTED VIGOROUSLY AGAINST PROPOSAL SAYING THAT ALTERNATIVES TO NAPALM WERE AVAILABLE TO LARGE AND WEALTHY COUNTRIES

BUT NOT TO SMALLER STATES OR POORER STATES. GENERALLY
FEELING IN THE GROUP WAS THAT, TO CONCEDE TO PROHIBI-
TIONS ON ANY WEAPON, UNLESS THERE WERE SOUND LEGAL
GROUNDS FOR DOING SO, WOULD NOT PLACATE FURTHER DEMANDS
FOR WEAPONS PROHIBITIONS BUT MERELY ENCOURAGE THEM.
CANADA, HOWEVER' WARNED THAT DELEGATIONS PRESENT IN
PARIS SHOULD NOT, FOR TACTICAL REASONS, TAKE TOO
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NEGATIVE A POSITION IN LUCERNE.

9. AFTERNOON SESSION WAS SPENT PRIMARILY IN DETAILED
DISCUSSIONS ON CATEGORIES OF WEAPONS WITH US TAKING
THE LEAD IN MOST OF THE EXPOSITIONS IN VIEW OF THE
GREATER US OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE.

10. MEETING CLOSED WITH FRENCH PROPOSAL THAT PRESENT
DELEGATIONS MEET IN LUCERNE AS MEMBERS SEE NEED FOR
CONSULTATIONS. FRENCH SUGGESTED THAT, TO DEGREE
POSSIBLE, LUCERNE DISCUSSION BE KEPT ON A TECHNICAL
PLANE AND THAT WE RESIST EFFORTS TO INCLUDE CONCLUSIONS
ON PROHIBITIONS.

11. AT LAST MOMENT, FRG SAID THAT THEY WERE GOING TO
MAKE A STATEMENT ON NATIONAL LIBERATION
MOVEMENTS TO EFFECT THAT THEIR PRESENCE WOULD IN NO
WAY IMPLY RECOGNITION OF ANY KIND BY GOVERNMENT OF
FRG. FRG REQUESTED VIEWS OF OTHER DELEGATIONS AND
URGED THAT OTHERS MAKE SIMILAR STATEMENTS. US AND
FRANCE STATED THAT THIS WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE
AND WOULD STIMULATE NEGATIVE REACTION AMONG THIRD
WORLD. WE BELIEVE THAT FRG IS GOING TO RETHINK THEIR
PROPOSAL AND PROBABLY DROP IT. MEETING CLOSED AND
DELEGATES DEPARTED ON A MOST EXCEPTIONAL SPIRIT OF
ACCORD, CONTRASTING CONSIDERABLY WITH WESTERN DISARRAY
ON OTHER ASPECTS OF LAW OF WAR.
IRWIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, MEETINGS, CONVENTIONAL WARFARE, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PARIS22636
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740268-1108
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740919/aaaaapqj.tel
Line Count: 210
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION L
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <21 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARIS SEPTEMBER 20 CONSULTATIONS ON CONVEN- TIONAL WEAPONS
TAGS: PORG, PARM, XX, ICRC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005